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## PROPOSALS FOR A REFORM IN LIGHT LITERATURE.

It seems to be confessed that the great difficulty of the age with respect to light literature is to produce anything new. All the styles and modes of fiction, the Waverley-historic, the Valerio-classic, the Udolpho-romantic, the horrible, the sentimental, the criminal, the silver-fork, the low, the everything, are totally worn out and worthless. We know every kind of character that is to be introduced, and every kind of conjuncture that can ruffle the course of supposititious events, and feel, before we advance twenty pages, that it is all barren. Like *l'homme blâssé*, we declare we have seen all that before, and turn away from the proffered meal with disgust, albeit perhaps raging with the sacred hunger of amusement. It has occurred to us that something might be done for mankind in these extraordinary circumstances, and we proceed to lay our scheme before a discerning public.

It may be thought a bold idea, in as far as perfectly new; but the longer we reflect upon it, it appears to us the more plausible that novelists might after all, make something of nature as she is. Many objections might no doubt be ranked up—were it not so, we should not have had novelists neglecting the truth of actual human life so long. In the dearth and exigency of novelty, some one would have pitched upon this idea if it had appeared readily workable. Still, let us calmly consider. The upturn of such a deep virgin soil could not but be attended with a grand vegetation. Surely some of the new plants would prove useful, if not for the conservatory, at least for the kitchen. It would be very strange if something could not be made of them. But let us at once come to particulars.

It is, for instance, a horrid stupidity this constant straining to bring about a marriage between two commonplace young people, with which the curtain may at last be allowed to drop. Suppose we make novels without any silly love affair in them at all, and end the third volume by representing the principal parties as sitting down to dinner instead of preparing to go to church. In actual life, one does not find that marriage is quite looked upon as the *summum bonum*, or that thing for which every other thing is to be sacrificed. We do not find that all the worthy people of our acquaintance are in a ferment of anxiety to get us tied up for life in Hymen's bonds. On the contrary, if we do make up our mind to the venture, we often find these worthy people in some anxiety as to how the affair may turn out. The lady's temper is probably discussed in a dispassionate manner; or our own abilities for housekeeping may be matter of solicitude. At all events, a calm hope may be expressed that we shall have the wisdom to insure upon our life for the benefit of our offspring.

Now, such being the manner of nature, why should we continually keep by the opposite in fiction? Let us try a novel for once without a marriageable heroine, or, say, one who despises marriage as an object to live for. There are women who scorn the idea of being thought under any anxiety for an establishment, and who would prefer eternal spinsterhood to an alliance brought about by manœuvring. Let us see such a person introduced into fiction. She could not fail to tell, from her mere novelty in that situation.

It is, again, a very tiresome thing in novels, as at present written, that every person introduced into them must be described as of a certain fixed character, according to use and wont in this department of literature. For example, if a boarding-school keeper is to be amongst the *dramatis persona*, then that person must be a paragon of dogmatic pedantry, false pretension, and heartless cruelty. The male boarding-school keeper must be an awful fellow in old-fashioned black attire, with threatening, bushy eyebrows, and that Herculean strength which may enable him to execute his own sentences upon the obverses of the boys; the lady boarding-school keeper a concentration of vinegar, verjuice, and deadly nightshade, with a figure like those which flourish in low valentines, and a breast devoid of the slightest tincture of the milk of human kindness. The pupils of both must regularly detest them as a matter of course. Parents and guardians are the unsuspecting victims of a hollow system, in which there is no more true instruction than there is humanity. I cannot, on any ground, see how the public is to be amused by characters thus formed in a set of old moulds, which never were very good at the first, and have at length become wearisome as an Art-Lottery engraving. I propose telling the truth as a variety which, *ceteris paribus*, must be more entertaining. As to the class of people who keep boarding-schools, every one knows there are many who, so far from being fiends in human shape, are worthy people, performing a duty of great irksomeness and responsibility with zeal and self-denial, often with very inadequate remuneration, and seldom with a return of kind consideration approaching that which they had bestowed on their pupils. Suppose we were to have painted to us, by way of change, a real boarding-school keeper of the male sex, dressed like other people, and rather attentive to, and popular amongst, the boys. Would it not be something at once fresh and refreshing? There might be plenty of innocent whimsicalities about him, to give him a relish—for such will be found the order of nature. Or let us for once have a fine, bouncing, clever, good-looking, and genial woman, in charge of a finishing school. We know such in life—why should they not be in novels? Anyhow, let us at least be done with the stereotyped pedants and viragoes, those dreary monstrosities, which never had an existence,

except in fancy, and whom one sees coming on in the advancing pages as you see a bore entering your avenue, or hear him sending his name up stairs.

Certain persons are not only always of certain characters in novels, but they are always represented as in a certain fixed congeries of circumstances. Every young author comes to London with a tragedy in his pocket, and finds the booksellers tipping him the cold shoulder. Now, in the world of fact, many young authors do not venture on a tragedy, and no inconsiderable number get work from publishers as soon as they are fit for it, if not before. In novels, an author is always a shabby-looking person, of excessive volatility, living in a garret. In fact there are many authors who live in handsome houses, and treat their friends to champagne suppers. In novels, they are always getting into wretchedness, because literary merit finds no sort of consideration. In fact we hear occasionally of a successful novelist, whose income for several years has exceeded that of the English prime-minister, or the American president, though somehow he has nevertheless been obliged, by the usual fate of genius, to seek the protection of the court. Would it not be a capital novelty to give us a well-paid, well-dressed author, whom one could scarcely distinguish from a man of high birth and large fortune, even in the particular of his 'difficulties?' Let us have an author who has not written a tragedy. Let us have an author who, in respect of booksellers, is the drainer instead of the drainee. The freshness of such a character in fiction would make any book sell. Or give us his ancient co-relative in the new aspect of an honest man, who scarcely can keep his own amidst the clamours of a set of insatiable *littérateurs*, and we will give three to one on the success of the delineation. As another instance—a governess in fiction is always a held-down woman of excessive modesty and merit—an unhappy creature, solitary amidst society, and never asked to drink wine. There are in the real world governesses who are exceedingly well treated; some who even take a lead in family matters; not a few who are repressed only on account of their insufferable *exigeance* and forwardness; and a vast number who are simply women of good sense, solicitous to perform their duty in the first place, and only to think of little matters of personal comfort in the second. Now let us have for once in fiction a sensible, well-used governess. Let us have a real flesh-and-blood governess of this world, and not the faultless monster in a continual worry because she is not danced with. Everybody must feel how delightfully new such a character would be to the world of the circulating library, and what a chance she would have in comparison with her ideal congenor.

Dealers in fiction might also revolve the propriety of taking somewhat more truthful views of the merits of various sections of society. Suppose that some one were to treat the world one day to a tale in which rich people and people of rank were to be allowed some small sparing investment of the common virtues of humanity. In actual life they have, as a class, their full share of such merits. It cannot be for nothing that the wearers of good clothes, and the possessors of stock in the funds or elsewhere, are called respectable people. Why should we not, then, have a few characters of the upper class in novels whom one could regard without a mere choice between ridicule and execration? A lord who was not a fool, or a *routé*, or an oppressor of his tenantry, would be a charming novelty in fiction. It might be rash to give full allowance of worth and good sense to the people of the Red Book all at once, for

perhaps here the public mind has got something of a twist; but a spic of decent intellect and good-meaning might be given by way of a first experiment, and perhaps in time it might be possible to represent wealth as not necessarily connected with heartlessness and imbecility. There might be a corresponding procedure with respect to the lower class of characters. We are tired of concentrations of all that is bright and beautiful in persons who might be expected, from their circumstances, to be no better than they should be. Robbers, with wonderful impulses towards angelic excellence, are decidedly palling on the popular taste. Let us have figures from humble life with something like that mixture of good and evil about them which we find in the actual world. Depend upon it it would take.

At the first consideration of this proposed reform, it may be feared that actual nature will prove a tamer and duller thing than the Birmingham nature so long resorted to by the dealers in fiction. Some will be ready to say, 'All very well to speak of truth; but truth is stupid: truth is for science, not for art.' I beg their pardon; but I must entirely dissent from any such view of the matter. I find in real life an endless variety of strange characters and eccentricities, any one of which would make better stuff for the novelists than any of the shams which they have inherited from the tradition of their craft. I have already pointed out how superior certain real sequences of events would be over the hackneyed groupings which the fictionist keeps in stereotype beside him. I feel perfectly clear in saying that I should enjoy in fiction, as I have often done in reality, the spectacle of a boarding-school where there was no stint of bread and butter. What I chiefly plead for, however, is the novelty. It would be like a new world opened up to the pursuit of the naturalist. Even with inferior writing this would tell immensely: with fair talent in the artist, nothing could stand against it. I believe at least that truth might stand out for a good many years, perhaps the whole of our own time. If it then began to fail in its effect, it would be for posterity to devise something as good.

#### QUETELET ON THE LAWS OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM.

GREATER attention has perhaps been paid to social questions during the present year than at any recent period. Civil perturbations naturally produce, with other effects, a disposition to devise rules for their governance, or remedies against their recurrence. There will of course be great differences in the character of the remedial measures proposed; still it is always best to look boldly at the evils with which humanity is afflicted, and in this regard honest endeavours to systematise social aberrations, to explain their laws, may find acceptance.

Among the writers who have occupied themselves with this subject, M. Quetelet of Brussels is already favourably known to many readers by his treatise on 'Man,' and the development of his faculties, published about twelve years since. This was followed in 1846 by 'Letters on the Theory of Probabilities applied to Moral and Political Science'; and now, as the complement of these, we have the work whose title is given in the note below.\* In the 'Letters,' &c. was originated the law of accidental causes; and this law is shown to be reducible to calculation in common with physical or mechanical laws. Many effects which appear to be accidental, cease to be so when the observations are extended over a large number of facts; and, as the author remarks, 'the liberty of choice (free will), whose results are so capricious when individuals only are observed, leaves no sensible traces of its action when applied to multitudes.' Hence the important law is deduced, 'that

\* Du Système Social, et des Lois qui le Régissent. Par A. Quetelet. Paris: Guillaumin et Co. 1848.

social facts, influenced by liberty of choice, proceed with even more regularity than facts submitted simply to the action of physical causes.' Although the tracing out involves certain difficulties, yet analogies are to be found between moral and mechanical laws; and on these various considerations it is urged that 'henceforth moral statistics ought to take its place among the sciences of observation.' It will thus be seen that the aim of the work before us is something beyond mere political economy: it is to develop the laws of equilibrium and movement, and especially the preservative principles existing between different parts of the social system. Man is brought before us in his individual character; in his relations to the nation to which he belongs; and last, the ties which, uniting nations, constitute humanity.

The law of accidental causes is not one of mere hypothesis, it may be proved by physical facts; for instance, the height of the human frame. By aggregating the heights of the population of a country, a mean is obtained which gives the standard, and the departures or variations from this mean range symmetrically above and below it; 'as if,' observes M. Quetelet, 'nature had a type proper to a country, and to the circumstances in which it is placed. Deviations from this type would be the product of causes purely accidental, which act either plus or minus with the same intensity.'

The groups on either side of the average are the more numerous the more they approach to or resemble the mean; and the more widely they deviate, so do they terminate in rarities, as giants and dwarfs. Every portion of the scale, however, has its value; 'there exists between them a mysterious tie, which so operates that each individual may be considered as the necessary part of a whole, which escapes us physically only to be seized by the eye of science.' The same law applies also to the growth of the body, which would be more regular were nature less interfered with; there is, besides, a standard weight, and a relation between a man's height and the rate of his pulse: taking the mean for males at seventy, we have a datum on which to base other calculations. The author regrets that we have no 'careful continuous observations on workmen whose labour presents a certain periodicity in the exercise of the limbs; on blacksmiths, for example, sawyers, shoemakers, tailors: they might lead to interesting results.' With regard to growth, he continues: 'at the instant of man's entrance into life, his height is fixed by nature; the variations remarked are purely accidental; and when grouped by order of altitudes, they equally obey a law. Such is the harmony with which all has been combined, that the anomalies even exist only in appearance, and they march with the same regularity as the laws whose movement they disguise.' The mean height in Belgium for the male is 1.684 metres, and for the female 1.579 metres.

M. Quetelet suggests, as a means of obtaining valuable and interesting data on many moral and physical questions, that a record should be kept in every family of all the events or circumstances that brought pleasure or grief to the household, that opened a new line of thought, started a new subject of inquiry, as well as periodical entries of the growth in height, weight, &c. of each member of the family. And he gives us an intimation that this course is pursued by Prince Albert, to whom his book is dedicated. With regard to the progressive development of the human being from birth to maturity, the author hopes at some future day to publish his researches, which will doubtless be valuable in an artistic point of view. Complex and difficult as the subject may appear, it is much simplified by the chief result: 'Man's proportions are so fixed, at whatever age we consider him, that the having observed a small number of individuals, is sufficient to give the type in the mean.' There is, besides, really less difference of development than would at first be supposed; uniformity is more prevalent than our appreciation of objects would lead us to conclude. 'In my early investigations,'

pursues M. Quetelet, 'on the proportions of the human body, I measured thirty men of the age of twenty; I distributed them afterwards into three groups of ten men each. In this separation I regarded one condition only—that of having the same mean height for each group, so as to render the other results more easily comparable, without the trouble of reducing by calculation. Thus the mean height was the same for the first, second, and third group; but what was my astonishment to find that the man selected as the mean, representing each one of my three groups, was not only the same in height, but also for each part of the body! The likeness was such, that a single person, measured three times in succession, would have presented more sensible differences in the measures than those which I found between my three means.'

The conclusions to be drawn from these physical phenomena are all intended to bear on the great moral view of the subject. M. Quetelet shows that many of the erroneous opinions to which writers on social questions have come, have originated in their regarding man in the individual rather than in the mass; that which defies calculation in the one case is easily established in the other. Moral are distinguished from physical phenomena by the intervention of man's free choice, and the exercise of this prerogative is found rather to restrict than to disturb the limits of deviation. Marriage is adduced as affording the best example of the direct interference of free choice; generally speaking, it is entered on with great circumspection. Yet, during the past twenty years, the number of marriages in Belgium, regard being had to the increase of population, has remained annually the same. Not only has the number proved constant in the towns and the country, but also as respects marriage between young men and young women, young men and widows, widowers and young women, and widowers and widows. The same fact holds, too, with regard to the ages at which marriage is contracted; and the great discrepancies sometimes observed in ill-assorted unions, are neither to be considered as fatalities nor mere effects of blind passion: like giants and dwarfs in respect of growth, they constitute the remotest deviations in the law of accidental causes. The same result also obtains in other human actions as well as that of marriage; there is a certain regularity in crime, in suicides, in mutilations to avoid military service, in the sum annually staked on the gaming-tables of Paris, and even in the unsealed, undirected, and illegibly-addressed letters deposited yearly in the post-office. 'With such an assemblage of facts before us,' asks the author, 'must man's free choice be denied?' Truly I think not. I conceive only that the effect of this free choice is restrained within very narrow limits, and plays among social phenomena the part of an *accidental* cause. It therefore ensues, that making abstraction of individuals, and considering circumstances only in a general manner, the effects of all accidental causes ought to neutralise and destroy themselves mutually, so as to leave predominant only the true causes in virtue of which society exists and maintains itself. The Supreme Being has wisely imposed limits to our moral faculties as to our physical faculties: man has no power over the eternal laws. The possibility of establishing moral statistics, and deducing useful consequences therefrom, depends entirely on this fundamental fact, that man's free choice disappears, and remains without sensible effect, when the observations extend over a great number of individuals.' In predication, however, on the number of marriages to take place in any given year, it is important to distinguish between the *apparent* and *real tendency* to the conjugal state. These may exhibit great differences. 'Thus one man may have all his life a real tendency for marriage without ever marrying; while another, from fortuitous circumstances, may marry without experiencing any inclination for wedded life.' It is possible to represent these tendencies by curved lines, which, for males, commencing at the age of 20,

and ending at 80, shows the maximum to be between 35 and 40. For females, the curve terminates ten years earlier, and reaches its highest point in the years from 25 to 30. The distinction between the apparent and real is essential; for although we are able to establish a law for the mass, we can prove nothing beforehand of the individual.

The same real and apparent tendency or inclination exists also with regard to crime, and nearly all other moral actions; for it is clear that a person may have a great inclination for crime without once committing it; another may abhor crime, and yet become culpable. 'It is thus possible,' says M. Quetelet, 'to state, from continued observations, the relative degrees of energy which lead men to execute certain facts. Thus, if I see a million men of 25 or 30 years produce twice as many murders as a million of 40 to 45 years of age, I should be disposed to believe that the inclination to murder among the former has twice the energy of what prevails among the latter.... It is important, therefore, to have a number of observations sufficient to eliminate the effects of all the fortuitous causes from which differences may be established between the real and apparent inclination to be determined.... So long as the march of justice and that of repression remain the same, which can scarcely be possible, except in one and the same country, constant relations are established between these three facts:—1st, Crimes committed; 2d, Crimes committed and denounced; 3d, Crimes committed, denounced, and brought before the tribunals.' An investigation of criminal tables has shown 'that the law of development of the tendency to crime is the same for France, Belgium, England, and the grand-duchy of Baden, the only countries whose observations are correctly known. The tendency to crime towards the adult age increases with considerable rapidity; it reaches a maximum, and decreases afterwards until the last limits of life. This law appears to be constant, and undergoes no modification but in the extent and period of the maximum. In France, for crimes in general, the maximum appears about the 24th year; in Belgium, it arrives two years later; in England and the grand-duchy of Baden, on the contrary, it is observed earlier.... Considering the circumstances,' pursues the writer, 'under this point of view, we shall better form an opinion of the high mission of the legislator, who holds to a certain extent the budget of crimes in his hands, and who can diminish or augment their number by measures combined with more or less of prudence.'

With regard to the theoretical mean, M. Quetelet affirms that 'man, in respect to his moral faculties, as with his physical faculties, is subject to greater or lesser deviations from a mean state; and the oscillations which he undergoes around this mean, follow the general law which regulates all the fluctuations that a series of phenomena can experience under the influence of accidental causes.... Free choice, far from opposing any obstacle to the regular production of social phenomena, on the contrary favours them. A people who should be formed only of sages, would annually offer the most constant return of the same facts. This may explain what would at first appear a paradox—namely, that social phenomena, influenced by man's free choice, proceed from year to year with more regularity than phenomena purely influenced by material and fortuitous causes.'

In treating on intellectual qualities, the author observes—'Two things at first are to be distinguished in our intellectual faculties: what we owe to nature, and what we derive from study. These two results are very different; when found united, and carried to a high degree of perfection in the same individual, they produce marvels; when they present themselves isolated, they bring forth nothing but mediocrity. A student of the present day, on leaving school, knows more than Archimedes, but will he make science advance a single step? On the other hand, there exists more than one Archimedes on the surface of the globe,

without a chance of making his genius public, because he lacks the science.' 'If,' we read in another place, 'phrenology should one day realise its promises, we should have the means of directly measuring man's intellectual organisation; we should possess as a consequence the elements by which to solve an extremely complex problem; we should know what each individual owes to nature, and what to science; we should even be able to establish numerically the values of these two portions of his intelligence; but as yet, we are far from perceiving the possibility of such a result.... One of the most curious studies that could be proposed in relation to man concerns the progressive development of his different intellectual qualities: it would be a question to recognise those which first manifest themselves, to verify the period when they attain their maximum of energy, and to appreciate the relative degrees of their development at different epochs of life.'

In the chapters on human societies, M. Quetelet traces cycles of duration for nations as for other departments of nature. Thus the Assyrian Empire lasted 1580 years; the Egyptian, 1663 years; the Jewish nation, 1522 years; Greece, 1410 years; the Roman Empire, 1129 years; giving an average of 1461 years, remarkable as corresponding exactly with the *Sothiac* period, or canicular cycle of the Egyptians, with which was comprehended the existence of the phoenix. This result would appear referable to the action of a law, of which, however, too little is known to predicate on events yet to transpire in the future.

The law of accidental causes admits of application to derangements of the mental faculties. 'Moral maladies,' we read, 'are like physical maladies: some of them are contagious, some are epidemic, and others are hereditary. Vice is transmitted in certain families, as scrofula or phthisis. Great part of the crimes which afflict a country originate in certain families, who would require particular surveillance—isolation similar to that imposed on patients supposed to carry about them germs of pestilence.'

The question is examined, Whether the indefinite contraction of the limits between which men can vary is a benefit? 'Absolute equality, if it could be realised, would lead society back to its point of departure, and if it became durable, would plunge it into the most complete atomy: variety and movement would be annihilated; the picturesque would be effaced from the surface of the globe; arts and sciences would cease to be cultivated; that which does most honour to human genius would be abandoned; and as no one would wish to obey another man, great enterprises would become impossible.' To complete the argument, it is shown that the means and the limits vary only in proportion to science.

Besides the points we have noticed, the work under consideration contains many valuable inquiries and suggestions. In the chapter on the intellectual faculties, for example, we find views on literary, artistic, and scientific productions—influence of age upon the development of dramatic talent—excess of labour—on emigration—the influence of the healing art on the social system—demoralisation and pauperism—antagonism of nations; and in the concluding section 'on humanity,' the department of aesthetics presents itself to the discussion: these questions are treated with the author's well-known ability. His work must be taken as a valuable contribution to moral science, to the cause of justice, law, and order. Whatever differences of opinion may be entertained, it is impossible not to be impressed by M. Quetelet's earnestness: he would have nations as wise and trustful as is sometimes the case with individuals. 'The two extreme states,' he observes, 'individuality and humanity, are not the result of human combinations; they are determined by the Supreme Being, who has established laws of dependence between them. Philosophy has busied itself with investigating its nature, and in recognising what each one owes to himself, and the duties which he is bound

to fulfil towards others.... It is by such laws that Divine wisdom has equilibrated all in the moral and intellectual world: but what hand will raise the thick veil thrown over the mysteries of our social system, and over the eternal principles which regulate its destinies and assure its preservation? Who will be the other Newton to expound the laws of this other celestial mechanism?

### THE WARREN.

SOME years ago I received an invitation from a lady, whom I shall call Mrs Estcourt, to accompany her to the quiet and picturesque bathing-place of W—; an invitation which was doubly pleasing to me, not only because I had a great regard for Mrs Estcourt, but because, within five miles of W—, there resided a family with whom I had formerly passed many happy weeks, and whose long-tried friendship made this prospect of being so near them most delightful. Mrs Estcourt had been a widow about five years; and at the period of which I speak she was little more than thirty. At an early age she had been married to a man considerably her senior, yet her marriage had been a most happy one; and although she was not disconsolate on her husband's death, she truly mourned his loss. Smiles, betokening perfect contentment, at length denoted that the widow's grief was over, when I accompanied her to W—. She was very beautiful in person, and fascinating in manner. Perhaps strangers might think her a *little* too merry-hearted, considering her position; but I, who well knew her innate goodness and sound sense, thought her clear pleasant laugh the most exhilarating sound in the world. She had already received more than one offer of marriage during her widowhood; nor is this surprising, considering her attractions, not to mention the fact, that her late husband had left her one thousand pounds a year. But Mrs Estcourt turned a deaf ear to the voice of the charmer, charmed he ever so wisely; and in the full enjoyment of her hobby—for she had one, and that a singular one perhaps for a lady—her days flowed peacefully on; and it was partly for the further indulgence of this hobby that she selected W— as the place of sojourn for the summer, it being favourite resort of the conchologist and mineralogist.

Mrs Estcourt had studied conchology enthusiasmically for some years, and she had a very pretty collection of shells. An indefatigable shell-gatherer she proved at W—; and on my mentioning that the son of those old friends, whose residence was within a few miles, was learned in like lore, and had an excellent museum of natural curiosities, she became eager for an introduction, and speedily drove me over to the Warren in her low pony phaeton. After traversing dreary hills and waste tracts of land, while listening to the sullen boooming of the ocean, it was cheering to arrive at this low, rambling, but substantial dwelling, inhabited by Mr and Mrs Bovell, and their son Mr Matthew. The traveller had need to arrive at an early hour of the evening, for soon after the curfew bell tolled, all the lights in the mansion were extinguished, and the family retired to rest; while long before daylight in winter, and with sunrise in summer, were the household again astir. This consisted of farm and household domestics; the husbandmen strictly fulfilling their appointed duties, according to the most approved rules and regulations of past centuries, no newfangled systems being listened to or tolerated by Mr Bovell; while the maidens assembled round their industrious mistress, with spinning-wheels, or other thrifty employments, each day after the morning bustle and the noon meal was over. At this meal the master, mistress, their son, and all the servants, out-door and in, dined at the same table, the only distinction being, that a lower place was occupied by the subordinates. Nor was this usage ever deviated from or omitted, let who might be the guest. In a capacious hall, with low rafters, and wainscotting black from age,

the table was daily spread for dinner, at an hour when some of us, calling ourselves busy folks too, are sitting down to breakfast. There was a yawning chimney in this old hall, with cosy nooks beside it; and, protected by a folding-screen, Mrs Bovell's own little tea-table stood ensconced here each afternoon. But when any lady visitor came to the Warren, there was a fire lit in the parlour, whose bay window looked on the gay flower garden. In this room, fitted up with snowy dimity, bound with green silken fringe, and decorated with antique engravings, the subjects taken from passages in the Sacred Writings, it was very pleasant to drink tea at three o'clock; when the cream and the butter, the home-made bread, hot and cold, plumcake and conserves, and last, though not least, the finest Hyson, brewed in the quaintest of teapots—fligreed and profusely ornamented was this silver heirloom—rendered that meal, after a long walk or a windy ride, singularly novel and refreshing.

The tea-table was presided over by the kindest and dearest of busy, cheerful, talkative old ladies, in the person of Dame Bovell, attired in brocade and ruffles, high-heeled shoes, and a coiffure with powdered roll surmounting her high forehead. Then in marched Squire Bovell, clad in russet gray of ample cut, with ponderous silver buckles in his shoes, and a well-curled wig on his fine old pate. He, indeed, professed to claim against tea; nevertheless, two or three tiny china cups (for the best blue and gold was always used in the parlour) had to be replenished one after another, as the contents disappeared in his hands; but it was to keep 'Son Matthew' company, said the squire, for Matthew was an inveterate tea-drinker—twelve and fourteen of these fairy bowls full being his 'parlour allowance.'

Mr Matthew Bovell was an only child, and at the time alluded to, a bachelor of forty years of age. He took some part in the farming operations with which the yeoman squire amused himself; for farming was rather an amusement to Squire Bovell than pursued as a mode of gaining his livelihood; for the lands were hereditary, and he was reputed wealthy. But Mr Matthew was not an idle man, even in his leisure hours, of which he had many—they being principally passed in explorations for miles around the adjacent country, bearing in hand a basket and hammer, with which latter implement he demolished innumerable flints, and dug into chalk-beds. In short, he was a geologist, adding to this the study of conchology and antiquarian lore in general; and it was his wont to exhibit, as the pride of his museum, a large flint, hollowed in the centre, which he had found and broken. Mysterious hints he threw out concerning the existence of a toad, whose home, for unimaginable ages, had been within its flinty bosom, until liberated by him. A collector of shells and minerals also was Mr Matthew; through summer heat and winter cold he wended his way over the hills, and across the downs, home by a circuitous route, laden with trophies and natural curiosities.

With a clumsy exterior and heavy countenance he combined a cold sarcastic manner, which did not tend to render him popular with the fair sex; he was, indeed, vilified as a regular woman-hater, though his supreme indifference was perhaps even more unbearable than downright contumely: there were rumours afloat that in early life he had been unworthily treated by a fair but fickle damsel, and hence his antipathy to the whole race of young ladies. He was an affectionate, dutiful son, and beneath a repelling exterior concealed as kindly and generous a heart as ever beat in human bosom; and in the midst of many cynical tirades, a merry word from his beloved mother brought forth a smile which lit up his clouded countenance, and astonished the beholder; for the smile was very sweet, and utterly changed his whole aspect, displaying at the same time a rare set of the whitest ivory teeth: few and far between were these smiles, and none save his mother had hitherto owned the power of conjuring them up. Therefore, when Mrs Estcourt became a

constant visitor at the Warren, and evidently delighted in all its antiquated yet novel customs, and Mr Matthew became her constant companion in explorations and shell-gatherings, 'wonders never will cease,' thought I; but when she actually approached the stern Mr Matthew with badinage, and playfully gave herself pretended airs, commanding him *here*, and ordering him *there*, and the white teeth and the sweet smile were visible in consequence, his mother, who had more than once noted these proceedings, was silent from amazement! She taxed him with having 'rubbish' in his museum, and he bore that very well, and asked her to help him in rearranging it; she called him a 'dirty old bachelor,' for not suffering the accumulated cobwebs to be cleared away from its walls and ceiling, and mops and brooms were in requisition by his orders next day; she dined at eleven, and drank tea at three; span with Dame Bovell—it was long ere she was clever at the spinning-wheel—and was a perfect pet and darling of the hearty old squire.

But suddenly there was a change in the pleasant aspect of affairs: Mr Matthew became reserved, and absented himself from the Warren when Mrs Estcourt was there; and when obliged to be in her society, his sarcasm and coldness of demeanour towards her more than once brought tears into her beautiful eyes, though no individual but myself witnessed this betrayal of wounded feeling. I made my own secret comments on the circumstance; and when Mrs Estcourt called Mr Matthew 'a bear,' and exclaimed that 'she hated him,' I had strong doubts that she did not adhere to truth; nor did my doubts rest here, for I also opined that the liking between this pair of opposites was mutual. I knew enough of Matthew Bovell's character to be quite sure that Mrs Estcourt's possession of one thousand a year (a fact which he had only latterly been acquainted with) would entirely preclude his approach in the guise of a suitor, even were such a fact as Mr Matthew 'going a-wooing' within the bounds of credibility. 'For,' said I, 'he considers mercenary motives so unworthy and dishonourable, that sooner than lay himself open to the bare suspicion of being actuated by such, he would sacrifice any hopes, however dear to him.'

'Do you *really* think this is the case?' said Mrs Estcourt musingly; 'and do you *really* think he cares for me in the least?'

It is unnecessary to give my answer here, or the conversation which ensued, ending with much laughing on both sides, and a wager between us of six dozen pair of the finest French kid gloves, depending on the solution of an enigma which we read in different ways. A few days after, we separated, Mrs Estcourt being suddenly called away to attend the sick-bed of a dear and aged relative, and I to take up my temporary abode at the Warren, whither I had been kindly invited. Mr Matthew was more taciturn than ever, more energetic in his geological discoveries, and even Dame Bovell's winsome cheery ways failing to bring the much-wished-for smile: the squire lamented the loss of his merry favourite; and I was waiting for what I considered a good opportunity, in order to test the strength of my cause, on which depended the weighty bet of the French gloves. I had been a guest at the Warren for a week, and I had heard from Lucy Estcourt of her relative's death—one who had been entirely dependent on her bounty for support; when, for the first time since my arrival, Mr Matthew took his place by the chimney-corner at his mother's tea-table, behind the comfortable folding-screen. 'I have had a letter from your ally and friend, Mr Matthew,' said I: 'you do not even ask after her.'

'Pray to whom may you allude?' answered he, redenying a little I thought: '*friends* are not so plentiful in this world that we need forget them.'

'I speak of Mrs Estcourt: she used to be such a favourite of yours; and now you appear to forget her entirely.'

'I am sure, my dear, *none* of us forget her,' broke in the worthy dame; 'for she is the kindest, prettiest,

merriest little soul that ever brought sunshine to the old Warren. I only do hope that no needy adventurer will impose on her goodness, and marry her for the sake of her fortune.'

'That is impossible,' returned I; 'as, in the event of her marrying a second time, she loses the whole of her jointure; and whoever takes her to wife receives a *penniless bride*.'

Mr Matthew was in the act of carrying a cup of tea to his lips as I distinctly pronounced these words: he gave a start; there was a sudden smash; and Dame Bovell exclaimed, 'Goodness a' mercy on me, Son Mat., what is the matter? It is a blessed thing that we are not in the parlour, or one of the blue and gold would have gone instead of this Wedgewood white and red.'

And as the old lady stooped to gather the fragments with my assistance, 'Son Matthew' darted from the hall, saying in a whisper to me as he passed, 'Do walk in the flower garden presently: I wish to speak a few words to you.'

The squire, who had been toiling through a county paper, spectacles on nose, looked up on hearing the commotion, with a loud 'Whew! It is twenty years ago since I saw Mat. so skittish; and that was when fair Emma Norden jilted him. What is in the wind now?'

But although I might have said that it was a gentle southern breeze, bringing sweet hopes, thoughts, and wishes in its train, I held my peace; for explanation was premature, even had I had any to offer: assurance, and my own private convictions, must be made doubly sure ere I ventured to claim my wager from Lucy Estcourt.

Any one who had seen Mr Matthew and myself sauntering round that quiet garden, until the evening dews began to fall, busily conversing, and deeply engrossed with our conversation, might perchance have suspected that I was the courted, and he the wooper, despite my green specs and rotund proportions. I could scarce help smiling at seeing the cold sarcastic Mr Matthew transformed into a timid, almost despairing lover; for it is said that timidity ever goes hand in hand with true love.

'How dared he presume to think of her, so beautiful and superior a creature in all respects! What had *he* to offer in exchange for *her* priceless hand? He could not even make amends, in a pecuniary point of view, for the fortune she must lose in the event of her marrying again. Besides, *he* was such a stupid, awkward fellow; and yet he loved her—oh! so dearly; and she was so kind and good, did I think he might venture to address her? She could but refuse him.'

Very guardedly I hinted, in answer to these disjointed exclamations, that it was just probable he would *not* be rejected; on hearing which, the sedate Mr Matthew seized my hand, and carried it to his lips, appearing transported to the seventh heaven. That night, ere I retired to rest, I wrote the following billet to my friend:—

'DEAR LUCY—As the Smiths are now in Paris, you had better commission them to bring over the six dozen gloves; as I claim my wager, and prefer genuine articles.—Yours, &c.'

The bridegroom-elect was curious to know what our wager was about; but as I thought the knowledge might render him presumptuous, I declined answering any questions; however, the secret was speedily won from Lucy herself, and was no less than this:—Mrs Estcourt had continued to express her conviction that Mr Matthew 'did not care for her: she was too light and frivolous to please him: he evidently disliked and avoided her.' I, on the contrary, insisted that such was not the case; and pointed out to her that it was only since he had learned how wealthy she was in comparison to him that the change observable had arisen. She then gave me full permission to reveal the truth of her situation, which was only known to her intimate friends, laughingly declaring that she would risk the afore-named

wager, and cheerfully pay it a thousand times over, if I succeeded in proving that she was loved for *herself alone*. 'Not that I think for one moment,' added she gravely, 'that Matthew Bovell would value my hand an iota more could it confer ten thousand a year on him, instead of *one*; but that I think with or without money—he is so superior to me, indeed to all mankind—he would scarcely make choice of one so unworthy as myself for his helpmate.'

When I heard her speak in this way, I became assured that their union must tend to their mutual happiness: nor have I erred in judgment; for they are, and ever have been, the happiest couple in the world!

Many and many times I heard the exclamation, on Mrs Estcourt's approaching second marriage, of 'Well, wonders never cease: but there is no accounting for taste, certainly.' And I must confess that I had sometimes marvelled at her choice. But how sweet were the tears of respect and gratitude which she shed as a tribute to the memory of her first husband—the firm friend who had so earnestly desired to secure her future happiness—when, on her marriage morning, the intelligence was conveyed in due form that she had *not* forfeited her jointure; the proviso having been made solely with the end in view, which she had attained—namely, 'gaining the disinterested love of an honest man!' And when I heard these words read, I almost felt ashamed of myself for having joined with the multitude in their unthinking exclamations.

This gay and pretty creature contentedly established herself at the old Warren, falling into all the out-of-the-world customs and habits of the antiquated owners: geologising with her husband, whose white teeth displayed themselves incessantly; reading news to the squire, who made 'a little fool of her,' Matthew fondly said; and spinning heartily with the dame, whose admiration and love for her daughter exceeded all bounds.

Squire Bovell and his worthy helpmate have long since departed, and newer fashions have usurped the place of the old ones at the Warren; for many young voices ring through the ancient chambers now, and many frolic feasts are performed in the low raftered hall, the folding-screen serving as a charming refuge for 'hide-and-seek.' They are the most beautiful children I ever saw—full of health and joy; and Matthew says 'they are the best-dispositioned and cleverest to be found on earth.'

A new wing has been added to the mansion, so that Lucy has a pleasant drawing-room in addition to the 'lavendered' parlour, though in the former still the 'blue and gold' are used on 'high days and holidays.' There is also an airy suite of nursery apartments, and Matthew seems to like them better than his 'sanctum' itself.

#### POPULAR MEDICAL ERRORS.

##### SECOND ARTICLE.

**Corns.**—That a corn has roots. The common idea, I take it to be, is, that a corn grows from its roots as a tree does, and therefore it is necessary to extirpate the roots before a cure can be accomplished. The advertisements of corn-cutters are often a good deal amusing. I saw one the other day in a Manchester paper, which took a different view from that commonly adopted. The advertiser began by stating that corns had no roots, but he went on (by inadvertence, I suppose) to add that there were no such things as corns, and concluded by a list of charges for removing them. When a part is a good deal exposed to pressure, the cuticle becomes hardened, just as it will at the ends of the fingers in those who play on the violin; besides this, the papillae of the subjacent true skin become enlarged, and give the appearance of roots when a section of a corn is made. This is all the mystery. So that, let us cut as deep as we will, if we continue to wear tight boots and shoes, the corns will speedily reappear. The kind of shoes which ladies are in the habit of wearing,

which merely cover the toes, and therefore make all the pressure bear on that part, are exceedingly objectionable, especially where the shoes are pointed, and the leather strong.

**Hydrophobia.**—The notion that hydrophobic patients bite those around them, and thus communicate the disease, is a popular error which I should think scarcely needs contradiction. However, it seems that the idea appeared worthy of contradiction many years ago. In the second volume of a work which Dessault published—*'Sur la Pierre des Reins, et de la Vessie'*—in 1736, he treats of the hydrophobia, and alludes to this notion with the ridicule which it deserves.\*

In respect to hydrophobia, there also is, or was, an opinion that patients suffering from the complaint are smothered by the attendants. I should think such an idea could now only exist amongst the unreflecting, not to say ignorant; yet it appears that a practice almost amounting to this was actually recommended and adopted by Van Helmont. 'He kept his patients under water until the psalm "Miserere" (the 51st, containing nineteen verses) was sung; and in one case a poor girl was drowned.'†

Drowning is only like another way of smothering, and this was certainly carrying too far the old adage of desperate remedies for desperate diseases. Whilst on the subject of hydrophobia, I may mention that the prevailing idea of its being peculiar, or even more frequent, in the summer season, is called in question by very high authority. The practice of muzzling dogs during what are called the 'dog-days' is common, I think, in most of our towns; but if we are to credit some of the writers on the subject, it is not more necessary than than at another time. The subject is too purely medical to be entered fully into on the present occasion. I may just state that M. Troillet,‡ who has written an interesting essay on *Rabies*, states that January, which is the coldest, and August, which is the hottest, month in the year, are the very months which furnish him fewest examples of the disease.

**Loud Voice a Proof of Strong Lungs.**—I have not unfrequently heard the loud cry of an infant considered as a subject of congratulation; 'for at least,' the mother would say, 'the dear thing has sound lungs.' Mothers are always kind and tender to their children, and one would be sorry to say anything calculated to destroy the smallest source of their comfort; but it is not merely in reference to infantile life that the observation is made. I have more than once heard it said by adults that they felt sure their lungs must be sound, on account of the clearness or loudness of their voices. It is true that disease of the lungs may, and does frequently, impair the vocal powers, but it is by no means to be stated in this general manner that a loud voice is indicative of sound lungs.

**Spontaneous Combustion.**—We often hear people speak of spontaneous combustion in joke, but the question may sometimes arise, Are there, in reality, any cases of this kind? Are we to credit the accounts which are to be met with in books on the subject? There certainly are some very extraordinary instances on record, some of which I may very briefly mention. The singularity about the cases seems to be, that the unfortunate sufferer is said to be consumed literally to ashes, without the furniture about him appearing to be more than just scorched. It is stated in the Transactions of the Copenhagen Society 'that a woman who had been for three years accustomed to take spirituous liquors to excess, and who took little nourishment, sat down one evening to sleep in her chair, and was found consumed in the morning, so that no part of her was found except the skull and the extreme joints of her fingers; all the rest of her body was reduced to ashes.'§ One case is related of a Madame de Boisdon, who was found by her

\* Hamilton: Hist. of Med., p. 257, vol. ii.

† Elliotson, p. 726, op. cit.

‡ See Watson, p. 699, vol. i. op. cit.

§ Beck's Medical Jurisprudence, p. 323.

maid on fire one day after she had left her for a few moments. Water was brought and thrown on her, but it only seemed to make the fire rage more and more. Finally, she was burnt to a skeleton in her chair, which, by the by, was only a little scorched. These cases, I think, will suffice; many more might be adduced, but they all seem to be of the same kind. I think it would require very good evidence to make one credit them.

That combustion of the human body can arise *synchronously*, as the term implies, does not, I think, find many partisans at the present time; but as in most of the cases recorded there seems reason to believe that the patient was placed in circumstances in which he might catch fire from ordinary causes, the question further arises, Can there be a high combustibility of the body? On this point there is not time to enter fully, as so many subjects have to come before us. I may state, however, that many very respectable authorities admit it as possible that the body may be preternaturally combustible, amongst whom I may mention Dr Alfred Taylor of Guy's Hospital.

*Milk.*—Milk forms a very nutritious and digestible article of food, and on many occasions medical men have to recommend it as the best adapted for the exigencies of the case in point. There is an opinion, however, very common, which I imagine to be in a great measure erroneous, that milk produces phlegm, and is therefore very much to be avoided in all cases of coughs. I will not undertake to say that milk is always proper for invalids; but I must say that I regard this peculiar phlegm-producing quality of milk to be in a great measure a bugbear, which does not deserve a serious consideration. I can conceive it very possible that persons of a plethoric habit, who drink large quantities of malt liquor, may so gorge the lungs with blood, that an increased secretion of mucus (the so-called phlegm) may arise; but I think that such result is very little likely to have its origin in a milk diet. Still people will affirm that milk does not agree with them, and I would not undertake to say that such is not the case. I only wish to state that the objection which is commonly made to milk in coughs does not seem to me to deserve credit.

*Vaccination.*—It is a common belief that there is a risk of introducing with the vaccine virus the diseases, or even constitutional tendencies, of the infant from whom the virus is taken. On this account mothers are very particular that the matter be got from a good source, and some will even insist upon seeing the child themselves. If it were really the case that the vaccine virus communicated more than the cow-pox, it might be found a valuable means of communicating vigorous constitutional powers to sickly children, and would even be more valuable in this way than in its application as a preventive of small-pox. I cannot, however, for my part imagine that there is any such effect. At the time when the great Jenner was endeavouring to diffuse his views in respect to the vaccine inoculation, many objections were industriously brought forward, and amongst others, it was said that the diseases of the cow would be thus introduced into the human subject. This was a very parallel kind of reasoning.

*Experiments.*—People are very ready to suppose that experiments are tried on them by medical men. I have always assured those who express this fear that they give the profession credit for a deal more ingenuity than is possessed by it. I really do not believe the great bulk of medical men, if pressed on the subject, could offer new suggestions in every case, at least such as they dare try. Think how long active and intelligent men have been cudgelling their brains to find out new remedies; and what is there left for us to do? Then, again, if we abandon the legitimate road, we open ourselves to risks which are more likely to mar than make us. Be assured it is very seldom indeed that medical men make use of untried means on their patients, and that there is very little fear of being made the subject of ingenious philosophical experiments.

*Disgusting Articles in Medicines.*—Many persons, especially amongst the humbler classes, have an idea that articles of a disgusting nature, such as dead men's bones, are used in the composition of medicines. At the present day this is certainly not the case; but it would appear from the older writings that plans of treatment of a very repulsive and disagreeable nature were actually employed. Many of these were happily in the form of outward applications, or used as charms, but have no doubt given origin to the ideas which prevail on this subject. Borlase, in his book of 'Notable Things,' observes that 'a halter wherewith any one has been hanged, if tied about the head, will cure the headache. Moss growing upon a human skull, if dried and powdered, and taken as snuff, is no less efficacious.'\* I think, by the by, we might ask, Is it any more efficacious, for it certainly is not more pleasant? Turner—the Dr Samuel Turner who wrote on diseases of the skin, and who seemed rather fond of strange stories—notices a prevalent charm among old women for the shingles: the blood of a black cat, taken from a cat's tail, and smeared on the part affected.† 'The chips of a gallows put round the neck, and worn round the neck, is said to have also cured ague.'‡ Spiders, as may readily be supposed, were in great repute as remedies. Burton, the writer of the 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' was at first dubious as to the efficacy of the spider as a remedy, though he states that he had seen it used by his mother, 'whom he knew to have excellent skill in chirurgery, sore eyes, and aches; till at length,' says he, 'rambling amongst authors, as I often do, I found this very medicine in Dioscorides, approved by Matthiolus, and repeated by Aldrovandus: I began then to have a better opinion of it.'§ For stopping hemorrhages all sorts of disgusting things were used. That very amusing and valuable writer, John Bell, says 'they tied live toads behind the ears, or under the arm-pits, or to the soles of the feet, or held them in the hand till they grew warm. Some imagined,' he continues, 'that they operated by causing fear and horror, but all believed their effects to be very singular; and Michael Mercatus says that this effect of toads is a truth, which any person willing to take the trouble may satisfy himself of by a very simple experiment; for if you hang the toad round a cock's neck for a day or so, you may then cut off his head, and the neck will not bleed a single drop.'|| These particulars are sufficient to show that the old modes of treatment were not the most pleasant that can be conceived. No similar practices are, however, now employed; and the idea that all kinds of disgusting things enter into the composition of medicines is altogether without foundation. We have only, indeed, to consider how much easier and cheaper it is for those engaged in the practice of medicine to supply themselves with roots and salts than dead men's bones, the blood of black cats, and other horrible conceits.

*Opening the Chest.*—The phrase 'opening the chest' is very common, and exercise is recommended with this view. We have no objection in the world to good exercise, if it be only moderate and regular; but the *opening* of the chest is fortunately not accomplished by back-boards and dumb-bells. However, the phrase, though vague, is perhaps sufficiently understood, and not particularly coupled with any false practical views. Whilst on this subject, I may be allowed to state that the fashionable gymnastic exercises are, in my opinion, by no means the most desirable kind of exercise. They are mostly calculated to do harm, and are used at a time of life when great mischief may result from them. Of this mischief I cannot particularise in this place, farther than to state that many important surgical diseases arise from undue straining, and continue to affect the whole of after-life.

*Mucous Membranes.*—Whilst on the subject of these

\* Pettigrew on Medical Superstitions, p. 64.

† Pettigrew, op. cit. 79.

‡ Op. cit. 63.

§ Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 245.

|| Bell's Surgery, vol. i. p. 264.

common expressions, I may just remark that there are some terms used which have really no meaning whatever, and cannot be connected with any definite ideas by those who use them. Sometimes we hear a friend say that 'he is dreadfully ill of the *nerves* ;' and another will tell you he is sorry to say that his wife is ill, and the doctors have pronounced it to be the *mucous membranes*. These are of course instances of expressions being used after the manner of Mrs Malaprop, without any inquiry as to their signification.

**Seven Years.**—People conceive that there is a change every seven years in the constitution. That a change is continually going on there can be no doubt. We know that an infant grows to a full-sized man, and consequently there must be a change of particles—a removal of some, and a fresh deposition of others—else we should have a mere superimposition of parts, and the body of the infant would be contained in that of the adult. But as to the seven years: for my part I never could understand how people satisfied themselves that such changes were completed in exactly seven years. I have often been asked by my patients—"Doctor, do you think I shall ever get rid of this complaint? They say there is a change every seven years: I look forward for this time, for I have already been ill five." The Roman Lustrum was, I think, space of five years, the Greek Olympiad a space of four years, but the seven years is the favourite period chosen as the one which regulates the changes of the body in public opinion. Of course a period like this will bring about many changes, and one cannot but look forward to such a period with feelings of interest and anxiety; still there seems no good reason to select this as the prescribed limits for the operations of nature.

**Ampputation.**—Persons are very curious, and it is very natural they should be, respecting surgical operations. I have often been asked what was the most painful part of an amputation; and before the answer could be well given, the querist has declared his own conviction, that the act of sawing through the bone, or at anyrate cutting through the marrow, must be the critical point. Now this does not appear to be by any means the case; and on thinking upon the subject, it seems to me that the idea arises simply from the word marrow being suggestive of great sensibility, and, as it were, the essence of all that is profound. But the marrow is merely the oily matter contained in the bones, and must in itself be devoid of sensation. In one application of the word it is true; it has reference to an important part, as in the expression 'spinal marrow'; but this use of the word, though sanctioned by medical men, is altogether incorrect, and arose in error. What is called the spinal marrow is not marrow at all but a part of the nervous system, which is continuous with the brain.

In speaking of surgical operations, I may mention it as a common idea that surgeons were in the habit of adopting means of deadening pain before they undertook an operation. Before, however, the recent employment of ether and chloroform, nothing was used expressly for this purpose. The tourniquet, which is placed round the limb to compress the artery, and prevent loss of blood, was no doubt supposed to be principally to numb pain.

**Scurvy.**—If we take the trouble to look into a professed work on diseases of the skin, we find a great many diseases described in a great many hard names, and at first feel quite confounded in our attempts to apply these terms properly to the cases we see. However, the public have made a very easy matter of it. With the great mass of people, there is one name which they apply in every instance, and in every instance they apply it wrongly. This is scurvy. 'What a pity (you will hear it said) that Mr A—— is so scorbutic!' 'And really Miss B—— would be very well-looking, if it was not for that scorbutic eruption.' 'What is this eruption?' you ask. 'Oh, that is only a little scurvy, which I have had many years.' 'Pray, doctor, can you give me anything for the scurvy?'

Now, properly, the scurvy is a disease almost confined to sailors, arising from the want of a supply of fresh vegetables. The symptoms of scurvy are entirely different from those which commonly go under this name in a popular sense. There is a soft, spongy, and bleeding state of the gums, and great debility of the body. There is, in reality, no proper eruption on the skin, but irregular blotches, like those produced by a bruise. This disease is not often seen except amongst sailors, and has no relation to the eruptions which we so often see in people's faces.

#### A VISIT TO THE WESTERN GHAUTS.

Nor even steam, that link which now so closely connects the dwellers in the far East with the progress and sympathies of their countrymen, has so much conducted to the improvement and comfort of India as the sanitary stations on the different ranges of hills which have of late years been obtained by the English, and which afford the possibility of renovating, in a pure mountain air, the health, strength, and energy that wither under a tropical sun. On the western side of India these 'mountains of refuge' are called the Mahableshwur Ghauts, and are near to, and indeed formerly made part of, the rajahship of Sattarah. During a recent residence in the Bombay presidency, I had the pleasure and benefit of making an excursion thither; and it has occurred to me that a sketch of this pilgrimage to the 'hill country' may not be unwelcome to some of the readers of these pages.

We left Bombay about the end of March, eager to escape the intense heat, already succeeding to the delicious temperature of the winter months; and crossing the harbour in a *bunder-boat*, proceeded up the Negôtnâh River to the village of the same name. Servants had preceded us thither with 'provant,' as Captain Dalgetty would have called it; and we took up our abode for the night at the travellers' bungalow, a wretched substitute for the cosy inn or elegant hotel of Europe, being little better than a barn, and very scantily furnished. It was sunset when we arrived; we had therefore little opportunity of seeing the surrounding country and villages, as night in India speedily follows an almost imperceptible twilight. Having little to amuse us in the bungalow, we retired early to rest; a measure the more necessary, as we were to commence our journey next morning at four o'clock, in order to avoid travelling in the heat of the sun.

An hour before daybreak we were summoned to resume our travels. Let not the idea of such an unseasonable hour suggest visions of the chilly discomfort attending on it in our own country. Nothing could be more exquisite than the air and the scene when we issued from the bungalow. The breeze, though comparatively fresh, was balmy, and the purple sky resplendent with stars. Jupiter, the lord of the ascendant, cast a line of light on the river, and hung like a globe of lucid silver from the heavens. The carriages that were to convey us to Mahr belonged to the post-office, and would have been tolerably comfortable vehicles, but for the height of the seats, which must have been intended for people at least six feet high. As there was a basket at the bottom of ours, well covered with palm-leaves, I took the liberty of using it as a stool, till at our first pause to change horses, one of the Parsees—who, by the by, had gained, from his excessive politeness, the sobriquet of Count D'Orsay—approached, and with a profound bow gently insinuated 'that it was not good for the Ma'am Sahib to sit with her feet in the butter!' As I found it was designed for our breakfast, I agreed in

the justice of his remark, and sat with my feet on empty space for the rest of the way. The road we traversed was wild and picturesque, bordered on each side by jungle, and affording in its windings constant glimpses of the blue hills in the distance: occasionally a herd of fairy-footed antelopes would bound across it, or the peacock, uttering a shrill scream, would retreat into his native woods; but no worse denizens of the brushwood made their appearance, being probably scared away by the horn our driver occasionally sounded. At last the Mahr River made its appearance; a broad, tranquil stream, reflecting the deep blue sky; and following its banks for a time, we at last reached the village. Here we breakfasted, dined, and remained, in short, till after sunset. We then drove to the foot of the Ghauts, but being detained longer than we anticipated, it was dark ere we commenced the ascent, which was to be made in palanquins. These were carried by four *hamals*, or bearers, four more running beside them to relieve them of their burden when weary; one, as it was now quite dark, carried a huge torch, on which he from time to time poured oil from a bottle he held in the other hand. The narrow path admitted but one palanquin in a line; we were therefore in a manner separated from each other, and alone with the bearers. The scene was really imposing: the gloom made the precipices on each side look deep and terrible, and such forms as one could distinguish in it took all kinds of fantastic shapes. The torch, smoking and flaring close beside the coffin-like conveyance, brought out in strong relief the sable hamals' well-oiled shining skins, and their rolling black eyes and glittering teeth, thus adding a perfect group to the foreground of the picture. Strange sounds, too, rose from the jungle: the hiss of the snakes; the cry of the jackal; the fainter, because more distant roar of other beasts of prey; and every time the bearers gained a height, they paused, and with shrill cries, thanked their monkey god for his aid, and for having given them only a 'light madam' to carry. The moon rose at last, and I could look down on the nests of jungle, and distinguish the clear outline of the hills: solemn and beautiful they looked, casting their awful shade on the home of the tiger and the boar; but I was now quite weary, and becoming too sleepy to observe more, awoke only when my bearers stayed their steps and my palanquin on the mountain summit which was to be our home.

Mahableshwur is situated on the highest point of the western Ghauts, and is a neat town, with a clean open bazaar, to which the money-changers, seated beside their banks (or white cloths), piled with all sorts of coin and currency, from moras to cowries—or small shells—give a picturesque and new feature. The bungalows of the English residents have gardens round them, and are generally very comfortable dwellings. The church is a small and *very* rustic edifice, having the bell hung in a large tree beside it. The society is cheerful, and the drives and rides on the mountain, though few, very attractive, from the scenery and delicious freshness of the air. Our own abode consisted of several scattered bungalows, with tents for the servants and gentlemen, for we were a large party; the drawing and dining-rooms were detached from the building called the Ladies' Bungalow, and we had sometimes to walk through a cloud on our way to dinner; but the house was well furnished, and nicely situated, commanding a fine view. We looked down on the first row of Ghauts, and a more singular scene can scarcely be conceived than the chaos of hill-tops beneath, all of extraordinary forms, and reflecting every shade of light and colour as the sun fell upon them. The mountain opposite our hill had been the scene of a horrid tragedy. In former times, the two mountains had been inhabited

by two rival chiefs, between whom a deadly feud existed. The disputes and fights between these Indian Montagues and Capulets were a continual source of annoyance to their neighbours, and the rajah of Sattarah and the English resident at last resolved on acting as mediators. Their peacemaking efforts were apparently successful; the chiefs consented to an interview; their grievances were to be mutually redressed, and they were to embrace as friends. The dweller on our hill (*Bella Vista*) was quite in earnest in these friendly demonstrations, but the Purtubghur man had meantime caused a pair of steel claws, exactly resembling those of a tiger, to be made, and fastened them to his hands, which, when closed, concealed them. Whilst in the act of embracing his old enemy, he fixed these terrible weapons in the back of his neck, and literally tore the throat asunder before those present could rush to the rescue. We were rejoiced to learn that ample justice had been taken for this horrible crime. The chief had been driven from his territory, and met the death he deserved.

The Ghauts are very singularly-shaped mountains. They give one the idea of having had a slice cut off their tops, and others are apparently crowned with strong fortresses; indeed, till assured that it was the natural formation of the hill, I thought that Purtubghur had the ruins of a fortification on its summit.

During our stay at *Bella Vista*, the rajah of Sattarah paid a visit, or rather made a pilgrimage, to a celebrated shrine in the vicinity. He came in state to our bungalow, to visit Lady A—— (the wife of the governor); and the procession was worth seeing, though very different from what one's imagination would have depicted of Eastern state and pomp. First came a party of men, who might well have personated Falstaff's ragged regiment, so poor, patched, and motley was their attire: these worthies shouted aloud, 'Room for the great rajah, the eater of mountains and drinker of rivers!' The ragged heralds were followed by the regular attendants, bearing bundles of peacocks' feathers, the insignia of their master's princely rank; then came two or three horsemen, bearing the round table-like banner; and lastly, the guest so formidably characterised, and who, in fact, looked as if he enjoyed abundantly the good things of this life, even if his diet were not quite of the inconvenient kind described. He bore a strong likeness to the pictures of Henry VIII., and was a courteous middle-aged gentleman, habited in the Eastern costume, and wearing a magnificent emerald ring on his great toe. He was exceedingly gracious, offered us the loan of his elephants, and gave the ladies permission to visit his lately-expoused wife, the Ranee.

I was sorry that indisposition prevented me from profiting by this opportunity of visiting a Hindoo zemana; my friends, who did avail themselves of the permission, were much pleased with the lady, who was young, beautiful, and *totally* uneducated, passing all her days in listening to stories, seeing Nauchi girls dance, and eating sugar-plums. This is the rajah who was placed by the English on the nominal throne of the Mahrattas, after that deposition of his brothers which has given rise to such dreary debates in the India House and in Parliament. Both brothers are now dead.

In one of our drives we were favoured with the sight of a wild tiger in chase of an antelope. The terrible animal sprang across the road at no great distance from the horses' heads, and disappeared in the jungle. He was hunted, and killed shortly afterwards. A reward of fifty rupees, or five pounds English money, given for the discovery of a tiger, has greatly tended to diminish the number of these animals in the neighbourhood of the English places of abode. We remained six weeks at Mahableshwur, and before our descent to the plains of the Deccan, found it cold enough to wish for a fire. The rains of the monsoon had also commenced, and our journey down the Ghauts, in pouring rain, and by dull cloudy daylight, was rather in prosaic contrast

with our midnight ascent. We had derived great benefit from the pure invigorating air, and even now, in our own cold but happy country, think with pleasure of our abode on the mountains of Mahabaleshwur.

#### ART-JOURNAL—THE VERNON GALLERY.

The late advances in all departments of art in this country are among the most gratifying traits of national improvement; and it is satisfactory to know that cultivated minds are engaged in forming and directing the public taste on matters of such interest. Too long did the aesthetics of art dwell only in the dogmas of connoisseurs, who chattered upon 'Raphael and stuff' with the precision of schoolmen; and it was not till knowledge broke loose from this charmed circle, and diffused itself abroad in the world, that art could be said to be of any practical value. From the early age of George III's reign, when all sorts of monstrosities were tolerated, it seems as if the public had advanced centuries in feeling. We cannot look around us without seeing evidences of improved taste. Old things have passed away, and we are in the youth of a new and more vigorous era. Among other wonderful things in this new age, must be mentioned the practice of making munificent gifts to the public. Formerly, every man thought he acquitted himself nobly if he paid his bills and his taxes. All that is quite antiquated now. This is the age of giving. The nation sometimes gives away ten millions in a paroxysm of charitable feeling; and in private life, subscriptions to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds are quite a common thing. Anybody who does not 'subscribe' to the extent of a few hundreds a year is thought nothing of. This, like other good things, may no doubt be carried too far; but how much more reasonable is it to give from your abundance while living, than to leave all at your decease to those who will not thank you, and who may probably be damaged by the gift? On this account it will be allowed that Mr Vernon, in lately making a present to the nation of his gallery of pictures—a gift of many thousands of pounds value—did a far handsomer thing than if he had bequeathed the whole to the public at his death. A bequest is the gift of what is no longer of any use to the giver; a present during life is a sacrifice. Here, then, is a man who takes down the whole of his collection of pictures from his walls, and hands them to the National Gallery, where they are merged in the general property of the country. Who, after this, will say that self-sacrificing generosity is not a proud characteristic of the age in which we live?

The notice of Mr Vernon's liberal gift to the nation brings us to the 'Art-Journal,' which has begun to present finely-executed engravings of each picture in the collection, by which means persons in all parts of the country may acquire a proper notion of those beautiful works of art, now the national property. Mr Vernon, we are told, spared no pains or expense in forming his collection. Thirty years was he engaged in the work: frequently he weeded out the least valuable pictures; and the most generous sums were invariably paid for his acquisitions. It is now some years since we walked through his house in Pall Mall; but we retain a lively recollection of the vast number of gems of art which adorned the walls. The whole of his pictures were British, and painted within the last half century; they therefore form a select illustration of the state and progress of the fine arts during that period. The first picture engraved from the Vernon Gallery is one of the beautiful English landscapes of Calcott, and we should say it is worth more than the money charged for the number of the 'Art-Journal' in which it appears. A portrait of Mr Vernon graces the same number.

While there is not a little to please in this periodical, there is likewise something to which we cannot give our admiration. We refer to the articles on the application of refined taste to domestic and other objects. It appears to be the wish of the artist who illustrates these papers

with wood-engravings to introduce greater elegance in form and embellishment into the more common class of manufactures, such as pottery, hardware, and household furniture. As the aim is high, so is the responsibility great, in trying to cultivate new fashions in objects of this kind. It is, therefore, not without regret that we see that forms and ornaments are held up for imitation which, as far as our judgment goes, can only mislead the public taste. What we more particularly object to is the introduction of naked human figures distorted into all sorts of odd postures. We have Sylphs with the tails of mermaids, forming bell-pulls; Cupids holding up candlesticks, sitting on the corners of fenders, and stuck on the ends of pokers. Crouching, kneeling, twining, bending back, standing on tiptoe, reclining, stretching out the arms; in short, in every imaginable posture are these drudging Sylphs and Cupids represented. This profuse use of the human figure seems to us indecorous. Doubtless, for the sake of beauty of form, art has a certain license; the main design being, to delight the eye and elevate the feelings. But the figures we allude to are anything but slighty, and are only the offspring of a capricious fancy. Flowers in various dispositions would be a safer subject of adaptation; yet even in their case care must be taken not to violate ordinary conceptions. Let us add, while on this subject, that elaborate carving, even when in good taste, is objectionable in common household articles, inasmuch as it renders them more difficult to clean. In these, elegance of form should be combined with strict simplicity; for we must not sacrifice utility to show, and fill our rooms with the dirt as well as richness of an old curiosity-shop. It is sufficient, however, that we offer a hint on these points; and we would further suggest to the editor of the work before us the propriety of writing a series of articles defining the license to which artists and manufacturers may properly go in their adaptation of natural objects. By manufacturers of carpets, paper-hangings, works in bronze, and household ornaments of all kinds, precise rules and principles in relation to this department of art are much required.

#### EXPERIENCES OF A BARRISTER.

##### THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT.

ABOUT the commencement of the present century there stood, near the centre of a rather extensive hamlet, not many miles distant from a northern seaport town, a large, substantially-built, but somewhat straggling building, known as Craig Farm (popularly *Crook Farm*) House. The farm consisted of about one hundred acres of tolerable arable and meadow land; and at the time I have indicated, belonged to a farmer of the name of Armstrong. He had purchased it about three years previously, at a sale held in pursuance of a decree of the High Court of Chancery, for the purpose of liquidating certain costs incurred in the suit of *Craig versus Craig*, which the said high court had nursed so long and successfully, as to enable the solicitor to the victorious claimant to incarcerate his triumphant client for several years in the Fleet, in 'satisfaction' of the charges of victory remaining due after the proceeds of the sale of Craig Farm had been deducted from the gross total. Farmer Armstrong was married, but childless; his dame, like himself, was a native of Devonshire. They bore the character of a plodding, taciturn, morose-mannered couple: seldom leaving the farm except to attend market, and rarely seen at church or chapel, they naturally enough became objects of suspicion and dislike to the prying, gossipping villagers, to whom mystery or reserve of any kind was of course exceedingly annoying and unpleasant.

Soon after Armstrong was settled in his new pur-

chase, another stranger arrived, and took up his abode in the best apartments of the house. The new-comer, a man of about fifty years of age, and evidently, from his dress and gait, a seafaring person, was as reserved and unsocial as his landlord. His name, or at least that which he chose to be known by, was Wilson. He had one child, a daughter, about thirteen years of age, whom he placed at a boarding-school in the adjacent town. He seldom saw her; the intercourse between the father and daughter being principally carried on through Mary Strugnell, a widow of about thirty years of age, and a native of the place. She was engaged as a servant to Mr. Wilson, and seldom left Craig Farm except on Sunday afternoons, when, if the weather was at all favourable, she paid a visit to an aunt living in the town; there saw Miss Wilson; and returned home usually at half-past ten o'clock—later rather than earlier. Armstrong was occasionally absent from his home for several days together, on business, it was rumoured, for Wilson; and on the Sunday in the first week of January 1802, both he and his wife had been away for upwards of a week, and were not yet returned.

About a quarter past ten o'clock on that evening the early-retiring inhabitants of the hamlet were roused from their slumbers by a loud, continuous knocking at the front door of Armstrong's house: louder and louder, more and more vehement and impatient, resounded the blows upon the stillness of the night, till the soundest sleepers were awoken. Windows were hastily thrown open, and presently numerous footsteps approached the scene of growing hubbub. The unwonted noise was caused, it was found, by Farmer Armstrong, who, accompanied by his wife, was thundering vehemently upon the door with a heavy black-thorn stick. Still no answer was obtained. Mrs Strugnell, it was supposed, had not returned from town; but where was Mr. Wilson, who was almost always at home both day and night? Presently a lad called out that a white sheet or cloth of some sort was hanging out of one of the back windows. This announcement, confirming the vague apprehensions which had begun to germinate in the wise heads of the villagers, disposed them to adopt a more effectual mode of obtaining admission than knocking seemed likely to prove. Johnson, the constable of the parish, a man of great shrewdness, at once proposed to break in the door. Armstrong, who, as well as his wife, was deadly pale, and trembling violently, either with cold or agitation, hesitatingly consented, and crowbars being speedily procured, an entrance was forced, and in rushed a score of excited men. Armstrong's wife, it was afterwards remembered, caught hold of her husband's arm in a hurried, frightened manner, whispered hastily in his ear, and then both followed into the house.

'Now, farmer,' cried Johnson, as soon as he had procured a light, 'lead the way up stairs.'

Armstrong, who appeared to have somewhat recovered from his panic, darted at once up the staircase, followed by the whole body of rustics. On reaching the landing-place, he knocked at Mr. Wilson's bedroom door. No answer was returned. Armstrong seemed to hesitate, but the constable at once lifted the latch; they entered, and then a melancholy spectacle presented itself.

Wilson, completely dressed, lay extended on the floor a lifeless corpse. He had been stabbed in two places in the breast with some sharp-pointed instrument. Life was quite extinct. The window was open. On farther inspection, several bundles containing many of Wilson's valuables in jewellery and plate, together with clothes, shirts, silk handkerchiefs, were found. The wardrobe and a secretary-bureau had been forced open. The assassins had, it seemed, been disturbed, and had

hurried off by the window without their plunder. A hat was also picked up in the room, a shiny, black hat, much too small for the deceased. The constable snatched it up, and attempted to clap it on Armstrong's head, but it was not nearly large enough. This, together with the bundles, dissipated a suspicion which had been growing in Johnson's mind, and he roughly exclaimed, 'You need not look so scared, farmer; it's not you: that's quite clear.'

To this remark neither Armstrong nor his wife answered a syllable, but continued to gaze at the corpse, the bundles, and the broken locks, in bewildered terror and astonishment. Presently some one asked if anybody had seen Mrs Strugnell?

The question roused Armstrong, and he said, 'She is not come home: her door is locked.'

'How do you know that?' cried the constable, turning sharply round, and looking keenly in his face. 'How do you know that?'

'Because—because,' stammered Armstrong, 'because she always locks it when she goes out.'

'Which is her room?'

'The next to this.'

They hastened out, and found the next door was fast.

'Are you there, Mrs Strugnell?' shouted Johnson.

There was no reply.

'She is never home till half-past ten o'clock on Sunday evenings,' remarked Armstrong in a calmer voice.

'The key is in the lock on the inside,' cried a young man who had been striving to peep through the key-hole.

Armstrong, it was afterwards sworn, started as if he had been shot; and his wife again clutched his arm with the same nervous, frenzied gripe as before.

'Mrs Strugnell, are you there?' once more shouted the constable. He was answered by a low moan. In an instant the frail door was burst in, and Mrs Strugnell was soon pulled out, apparently more dead than alive, from underneath the bedstead, where she, in speechless consternation, lay partially concealed. Placing her in a chair, they soon succeeded—much more easily, indeed, than they anticipated—in restoring her to consciousness. Nervously she glanced round the circle of eager faces that environed her, till her eyes fell upon Armstrong and his wife, when she gave a loud shriek, and muttering, 'They, they are the murderers,' swooned, or appeared to do so, again instantly.

The accused persons, in spite of their frenzied protestations of innocence, were instantly seized and taken off to a place of security; Mrs Strugnell was conveyed to a neighbour's close by; the house was carefully secured; and the agitated and wondering villagers departed to their several homes, but not, I fancy, to sleep any more for that night.

The deposition made by Mrs Strugnell at the inquest on the body was in substance as follows:—

'On the afternoon in question she had, in accordance with her usual custom, proceeded to town. She called on her aunt, took tea with her, and afterwards went to the Independent Chapel. After service, she called to see Miss Wilson, but was informed that, in consequence of a severe cold, the young lady was gone to bed. She then immediately proceeded homewards, and consequently arrived at Craig Farm more than an hour before her usual time. She let herself in with her latch key, and proceeded to her bedroom. There was no light in Mr. Wilson's chamber, but she could hear him moving about in it. She was just about to go down stairs, having put away her Sunday bonnet and shawl, when she heard a noise, as of persons entering by the back way, and walking gently across the kitchen floor. Alarmed as to who it could be, Mr and Mrs Armstrong not being expected home for several days, she gently closed her door, and locked it. A few minutes after, she heard stealthy steps ascending the creaking stairs, and, presently her door was tried, and a voice in a low hurried whisper said, "Mary, are you there?" She was positive it was Mr Armstrong's voice, but was too

terrified to answer. Then Mrs Armstrong—she was sure it was she—said also in a whisper, and as if addressing her husband, "She is never back at this hour." A minute or so after there was a tap at Mr Wilson's door. She could not catch what answer was made; but by Armstrong's reply, she gathered that Mr Wilson had lain down, and did not wish to be disturbed. He was often in the habit of lying down with his clothes on. Armstrong said, "I will not disturb you, sir; I'll only just put this parcel on the table." There is no lock to Mr Wilson's door. Armstrong stepped into the room, and almost immediately she heard a sound as of a violent blow, followed by a deep groan, and then all was still. She was paralysed with horror and affright. After the lapse of a few seconds, a voice—Mrs Armstrong's undoubtedly—asked in a tremulous tone if "all was over?" Her husband answered "Yes: but where be the keys of the writing-desk kept?" "In the little table-drawer," was the reply. Armstrong then came out of the bedroom, and both went into Mr Wilson's sitting apartment. They soon returned, and crept stealthily along the passage to their own bedrooms on the same floor. They then went down stairs to the kitchen. One of them—the woman, she had no doubt—went out the backway, and heavy footsteps again ascended the stairs. Almost dead with fright, she then crawled under the bedstead, and remembered no more till she found herself surrounded by the villagers.

In confirmation of this statement, a large clasp-knife belonging to Armstrong, and with which it was evident the murder had been perpetrated, was found in one corner of Wilson's bedroom; and a mortgage deed, for one thousand pounds on Craig Farm, the property of Wilson, and which Strugnell swore was always kept in the writing-desk in the front room, was discovered in a chest in the prisoners' sleeping apartment, together with nearly one hundred and fifty pounds in gold, silver, and county bank-notes, although it was known that Armstrong had but a fortnight before declined a very advantageous offer of some cows he was desirous of purchasing, under the plea of being short of cash. Worse perhaps than all, a key of the back-door was found in his pocket, which not only confirmed Strugnell's evidence, but clearly demonstrated that the knocking at the door for admittance, which had roused and alarmed the hamlet, was a pure subterfuge. The conclusion, therefore, almost universally arrived at throughout the neighbourhood was, that Armstrong and his wife were the guilty parties; and that the bundles, the broken locks, the sheet hanging out of the window, the shiny, black hat, were, like the knocking, mere cunning devices to mislead inquiry.

The case excited great interest in the county, and I esteemed myself professionally fortunate in being selected to hold the brief for the prosecution. I had satisfied myself, by a perusal of the depositions, that there was no doubt of the prisoners' guilt; and I determined that no effort on my part should be spared to insure the accomplishment of the ends of justice. I drew the indictment myself; and in my opening address to the jury, dwelt with all the force and eloquence of which I was master upon the heinous nature of the crime, and the conclusiveness of the evidence by which it had been brought home to the prisoners. I may here, by way of parenthesis, mention that I resorted to a plan in my address to the jury which I have seldom known to fail. It consisted in fixing my eyes and addressing my language to each juror one after the other. In this way each considers the address to be an appeal to his individual intelligence, and responds to it by falling into the views of the barrister. On this occasion the jury easily fell into the trap. I could see that I had got them into the humour of putting confidence in the evidence I had to produce.

The trial proceeded. The cause of the death was scientifically stated by two medical men. Next followed the evidence as to the finding of the knife in the bedroom of the deceased; the discovery of the mortgage

deed, and the large sum of money, in the prisoners' sleeping apartment; the finding the key of the back-door in the male prisoner's pocket; and his demeanour and expressions on the night of the perpetration of the crime. In his cross-examination of the constable, several facts perfectly new to me were elicited by the very able counsel for the prisoners. Their attorney had judiciously maintained the strictest secrecy as to the nature of the defence, so that it now took me completely by surprise. The constable, in reply to questions by counsel, stated that the pockets of the deceased were empty; that not only his purse, but a gold watch, chain, and seals, which he usually wore, had vanished, and no trace of them had as yet been discovered. Many other things were also missing. A young man of the name of Pearce, apparently a sailor, had been seen in the village once or twice in the company of Mary Strugnell; but he did not notice what sort of hat he generally wore; he had not seen Pearce since the night the crime was committed; had not sought for him.

Mary Strugnell was the next witness. She repeated her previous evidence with precision and apparent sincerity, and then I abandoned her with a mixed feeling of anxiety and curiosity to the counsel for the defence. A subtle and able cross-examination of more than two hours' duration followed; and at its conclusion, I felt that the case for the prosecution was so damaged, that a verdict of condemnation was, or ought to be, out of the question. The salient points dwelt upon, and varied in every possible way, in this long sifting, were these:—

'What was the reason she did not return in the evening in question to her aunt's to supper as usual?'

'She did not know, except that she wished to get home.'

'Did she keep company with a man of the name of Pearce?'

'She had walked out with him once or twice.'

'When was the last time?'

'She did not remember.'

'Did Pearce walk with her home on the night of the murder?'

'No.'

'Not part of the way?'

'Yes; part of the way.'

'Did Pearce sometimes wear a black, shiny hat?'

'No—yes: she did not remember.'

'Where was Pearce now?'

'She didn't know.'

'Had he disappeared since that Sunday evening?'

'She didn't know.'

'Had she seen him since?'

'No.'

'Had Mr Wilson ever threatened to discharge her for insolence to Mrs Armstrong?'

'Yes; but she knew he was not in earnest.'

'Was not the clasp-knife that had been found always left in the kitchen for culinary purposes?'

'No—not always; generally—but not this time that Armstrong went away, she was sure.'

"Mary Strugnell, you are a false-sworn woman before God and man!" interrupted the male prisoner with great violence of manner.

The outbreak of the prisoner was checked and rebuked by the judge, and the cross-examination soon afterwards closed. Had the counsel been allowed to follow up his advantage by an address to the jury, he would, I doubt not, spite of their prejudices against the prisoners, have obtained an acquittal; but as it was, after a neutral sort of charge from the judge, by no means the ablest that then adorned the bench, the jurors, having deliberated for something more than half an hour, returned into court with a verdict of 'guilty' against both prisoners, accompanying it, however, with a strong recommendation to mercy!

"Mercy!" said the judge. "What for? On what ground?"

The jurors stared at each other and at the judge:

they had no reason to give! The fact was, their conviction of the prisoners' guilt had been very much shaken by the cross-examination of the chief witness for the prosecution, and this recommendation was a compromise which conscience made with doubt. I have known many such instances.

The usual ridiculous formality of asking the wretched convicts what they had to urge why sentence should not be passed upon them was gone through; the judge, with unmoved feelings, put on the fatal cap; and then a new and startling light burst upon the mysterious, bewildering affair.

"Stop, my lord!" exclaimed Armstrong with rough vehemence. "Hear me speak! I'll tell ye all about it; I will indeed, my lord. Quiet, Martha, I tell ye. It's I, my lord, that's guilty, not the woman. God bless ye, my lord; not the wife! Doant hurt the wife, and I'll tell ye all about it. I alone am guilty; not, the Lord be praised, of murder, but of robbery!"

"John!—John!" sobbed the wife, clinging passionately to her husband, "let us die together!"

"Quiet, Martha, I tell ye! Yes, my lord, I'll tell ye all about it. I was gone away, wife and I, for more nor a week, to receive money for Mr Wilson, on account of smuggled goods—that money, my lord, as was found in the chest. When we came home on that dreadful Sunday night, my lord, we went in back way; and hearing a noise, I went up stairs, and found poor Wilson stone-dead on the floor. I were dreadful skeered, and let drop the candle. I called to wife, and told her of it. She screamed out, and amainst fainted away. And then, my lord, all at once the devil shot it into my head to keep the money I had brought; and knowing as the keys of the desk where the mortgage writing was kept was in the bedroom, I crept back, as that false-hearted woman said, got the keys, and took the deed; and then I persuaded wife, who had been trembling in the kitchen all the while, that we had better go out quiet again, as there was nobody in the house but us: I had tried that woman's door—and we might perhaps be taken for the murderers. And so we did; and that's the downright, honest truth, my lord. I'm rightly served; but God bless you, doant hurt the woman—my wife, my lord, these thirty years. Five-and-twenty years ago come May, which I shall never see, we buried our two children. Had they lived, I might have been a better man; but the place they left empty was soon filled up by love of cursed lucre, and that has brought me here. I deserve it; but oh, mercy, my lord! mercy, good gentlemen!—turning from the stony features of the judge to the jury, as if they could help him—not for me, but the wife. She be as innocent of this as a new-born babe. It's I! I! scoundrel that I be, that has brought thee, Martha, to this shameful pass!" The rugged man snatched his life-companion to his breast with passionate emotion, and tears of remorse and agony streamed down his rough cheeks.

I was deeply affected, and felt that the man had uttered the whole truth. It was evidently one of those cases in which a person liable to suspicion damages his own cause by resorting to a trick. No doubt, by his act of theft, Armstrong had been driven to an expedient which would not have been adopted by a person perfectly innocent. And thus, from one thing to another, the charge of murder had been fixed upon him and his hapless wife. When his confession had been uttered, I felt a species of self-accusation in having contributed to his destruction, and gladly would I have undone the whole day's proceedings. The judge, on the contrary, was quite undisturbed. Viewing the harangue of Armstrong as a mere tissue of falsehood, he coolly pronounced sentence of death on the prisoners. They were to be hanged on Monday. This was Friday.

"A bad job!" whispered the counsel for the defence as he passed me. "That witness of yours, the woman Strugnell, is the real culprit."

I tasted no dinner that day: I was sick at heart; for I felt as if the blood of two fellow-creatures was on my

hands. In the evening I sallied forth to the judge's lodgings. He listened to all I had to say; but was quite imperturbable. The obstinate old man was satisfied that the sentence was as it should be. I returned to my inn in a fever of despair. Without the approval of the judge, I knew that an application to the secretary of state was futile. There was not even time to send to London, unless the judge had granted a respite.

All Saturday and Sunday I was in misery. I denounced capital punishment as a gross iniquity—a national sin and disgrace; my feelings of courage being influenced somewhat by a recollection of that unhappy affair of Harvey, noticed in my previous paper. I half resolved to give up the bar, and rather go and sweep the streets for a livelihood, than run the risk of getting poor people hanged who did not deserve it.

On the Monday morning I was pacing up and down my breakfast-room in the next assize town, in a state of great excitement, when a chaise-and-four drove rapidly up to the hotel, and out tumbled Johnson the constable. His tale was soon told. On the previous evening, the landlady of the Black Swan, a road-side public-house about four miles distant from the scene of the murder, reading the name of Pearce in the report of the trial in the Sunday county paper, sent for Johnson to state that that person had on the fatal evening called and left a portmanteau in her charge, promising to call for it in an hour, but had never been there since. On opening the portmanteau, Wilson's watch, chains, and seals, and other property, were discovered in it; and Johnson had, as soon as it was possible, set off in search of me. Instantly, for there was not a moment to spare, I, in company with Armstrong's counsel, sought the judge, and with some difficulty obtained from him a formal order to the sheriff to suspend the execution till further orders. Off I and the constable started, and happily arrived in time to stay the execution, and deprive the already-assembled mob of the brutal exhibition they so anxiously awaited. On inquiring for Mary Strugnell, we found that she had absconded on the evening of the trial. All search for her proved vain.

Five months had passed away; the fate of Armstrong and his wife was still undecided, when a message was brought to my chambers in the Temple from a woman said to be dying in St Bartholomew's Hospital. It was Mary Strugnell; who, when in a state of intoxication, had fallen down in front of a carriage, as she was crossing near Holborn Hill, and had both her legs broken. She was dying miserably, and had sent for me to make a full confession relative to Wilson's murder. Armstrong's account was perfectly correct. The deed was committed by Pearce, and they were packing up their plunder when they were startled by the unexpected return of the Armstrongs. Pearce, snatching up a bundle and a portmanteau, escaped by the window; she had not nerve enough to attempt it, and crawled back to her bedroom, where she, watching the doings of the farmer through the chinks of the partition which separated her room from the passage, concocted the story which convicted the prisoners. Pearce thinking himself pursued, too heavily encumbered for rapid flight, left the portmanteau as described, intending to call for it in the morning, if his fears proved groundless. He, however, had not courage to risk calling again, and made the best of his way to London. He was now in Newgate under sentence of death for a burglary, accompanied by personal violence to the inmates of the dwelling he and his gang had entered and robbed. I took care to have the deposition of the dying wretch put into proper form; and the result was, after a great deal of petitioning and worrying of authorities, a full pardon for both Armstrong and his wife. They sold Craig Farm, and removed to some other part of the country, where, I never troubled myself to inquire. Deeply grateful was I to be able at last to wash my hands of an affair which had cost me so much anxiety and vexation; albeit the lesson it afforded me of not coming hastily to

conclusions, even when the truth seems, as it were, upon the surface of the matter, has not been, I trust, without its uses.

#### THE ENCHANTED BAY.

[THE following adventure of a boat's crew, in their voyage from Possession Island, a small guano station near the coast of South Africa, to Walwich Bay on the mainland, is extracted from the 'Cape Town Mirror,' a very meritorious miscellany recently commenced]—

The breeze was very light, and it was midnight before we heard the breakers on Pelican Point, a long spit of sand, forming the western side of Walwich Bay. It was then blowing fresh, with very thick weather, and we stood off till morning. At daylight on the 12th we stood in again for Pelican Point; as the wind now blew from the south-east, which was directly off the bay, we found it would be necessary to work in. I therefore filled the ballast-casks, to give the boat a better hold on the water, and kept three hands baling, as she then leaked very badly. In this way we got in before evening, near enough to see, close to the beach, on the east side of the bay, opposite Pelican Point, a small storehouse, built of planks, with a large triangle or 'shears' near it, such as are used to fasten cattle to for slaughtering.

The wind, however, continued adverse, and we were unable to effect a landing before sunset, and were thus obliged to stand out to sea again. As the evening advanced, the wind drew round to the south-west, and was thus driving us gradually over towards the land north of the bay, near the mouth of the Swakop River. Not being able to wear the boat, for fear of her filling, we were obliged to 'club-haul' her, by throwing overboard, on the weather-bow, a sail lashed to an oar, and this made fast by a line passing round to the lee-bow of the boat. The sail and oar floated on the surface, and not being so high out of water as the boat, were not carried forward so fast by the force of the wind. Thus the line, pulling at the lee-bow, gradually drew the boat's head round to the south-east, and she then drifted along parallel with the land. I have given this explanation not for the benefit of seamen, who of course do not need it, but for those readers who may never happen to have seen a boat put about in this fashion.

My companions were now ready to give up altogether, believing that we should never reach the land. They were quite worn out, and for a time refused to lend a hand in working the boat, declaring that it was useless, and that our case was desperate. At length, after much reasoning and persuasion, I induced them to aid in making one more trial.

By good fortune, shortly after midnight, the wind, for the first time since we left the ship, came out from the northward, and enabled us to stand in, as we thought, directly for the bay. What was our surprise and alarm, then, to find, when the sun rose over the eastern mountains, that we were approaching a part of the coast of which we had not the slightest recollection! On our starboard-bow, where we expected to see Pelican Point, was a low sandy island, that we had no knowledge of whatever. Other islands lay right ahead between us and the mountains. The hut and the shears were nowhere to be seen. We could not tell what to make of it. I began to be afraid that we had been carried by a current to a place laid down on the chart as Sandwich Harbour, about thirty miles south of Walwich Bay, though how we could have come so far in so short a time I could not imagine.

We continued to stand on, in great wonder and perplexity, till Frederick Noon suddenly exclaimed, 'See! there is a woman in a white shawl on that island.' We looked, and certainly saw something that had very much the appearance he described. But while we were doubting and speculating upon it, the supposed woman suddenly unfolded her wings and flew off, in the shape of a pelican with brown wings and a white neck and head. We had a hearty laugh at Fred's mistake, but were at the same time puzzled to think how it was that we had not discovered the deception till the bird flew away, as the distance did not seem great enough to give rise to such an error.

At length, as we kept drawing in to the land, some one cried out—'There is a village, and the people about it.' And sure enough there they were, right before us, and, as it seemed, not half a mile distant. There was a row of round-topped huts above the beach; and the people,

in clothing of various colours, were standing before them, apparently engaged in watching our motions. The little naked brown children could also be distinguished running about at the edge of the water. The people seemed to be numerous, and we were at first uncertain how to act. At length, after a brief consideration, I determined to take the risk of landing alone. Putting off a part of my clothes, in order to swim ashore, and giving my watch and some other small articles which I had about me to Frederick to keep, I directed my companions, in case they saw any harm befall me, to bear away immediately for an anchorage laid down on the coast to the northward, where it was possible that they might find a trading vessel, or at least obtain some provisions on shore.

I then jumped into the water. The splash which I made produced a miraculous effect: the whole crowd of people on shore, great and small, gray, red, and brown, instantly soared up into the air, and flew away in a cloud of pelicans, flamingoes, sand-pipers, and other birds. This put the climax to our perplexity. We were too much astonished to be amused at our strange blunder. Bearing up again for the shore, we presently arrived at the beach, and landed. On going up to the supposed village, it proved to be the skeleton of an enormous whale, whose arching ribs had taken the appearance of a row of native huts. Still it seemed very singular that we should have been so completely deceived at so short a distance.

On looking about us, we found that not only was the land we stood on an island, but we were surrounded by numberless low sandy islets, between which the sea was running in and out in the strangest manner. My companions now became greatly alarmed, declaring that we should all perish if we remained there, and insisting that we should quit this desolate and unknown region, and look for Walwich Bay. To quiet them, and to clear up the uncertainty of our situation, I resolved, as it was now nearly noon, to get an observation, and determine our real situation. Accordingly, we went back to the boat, and stood out from the land, in order to obtain a clear horizon. On taking the altitude of the sun, and making the calculation, I found that we were in the precise latitude of Walwich Bay. The others thought that I was deceiving them; but feeling positive I was right, I resolved to stand in for the shore again, in hopes that the mystery would be cleared up.

And now a wonderful change was apparent. The sun, having passed the meridian, was now shining with a western declination. A smart breeze, moreover, had arisen and swept away the haze that hung over the land. With it, and with the change in the position of the sun, the *mirage*, which had been the cause of all our perplexities, had disappeared. Everything was now familiar to us as we had seen it on the previous afternoon. There was Pelican Point, with the skeleton of the whale, and the hundreds of birds about it, no longer magnified by the deceptive haze, but in their natural proportions. The straits which had converted it into an island were now changed to dry land, as was also the seeming sea which had flowed about the sand-hills on shore, and turned them into so many islets. On the opposite side of the bay, the store and the triangle, which had been concealed by the mist, were plainly visible. The source of all our mistakes was now apparent; at the same time, I am inclined to think that any other persons, coming in as we did, would have been equally deceived. When we told the missionaries of our troubles and perplexities on this occasion, they were very much amused, and said that they had at first been frequently puzzled, both at the bay and in travelling through the country, by the delusive appearances of the *mirage*, to which it required some time to become so accustomed as not to be misled. The bay, they said, from its shape, and the nature of the country about it, seemed to be peculiarly subject to those variations in the density and refractive power of the atmosphere which give rise to these singular effects. I have been thus particular in describing them, thinking that it may be of use to put my brother mariners on their guard against this source of deception on approaching a coast.

#### THE SECRET OF EDUCATION.

Repetition is the mother of all culture. Like the fresco painter, let the educator lay his colours on the wet chalk; they will dry in, indeed, but he will renew them again and again until they remain and bloom for ever.—*Richter.*

## SPERM OIL—A FISCAL PARADOX.

The duty of L.12, 10s. per tun, until lately levied on sperm oil, has ceased and determined. On this event the 'Atlas' newspaper has the following observations:—<sup>4</sup> For the future, sperm oil will be obtainable for L.12, 10s. per tun less than it had hitherto cost; and from this circumstance it would seem to follow, as a natural inference, that the market price of the article should show a reduction to the amount. This, however, is not the fact. The price of sperm oil, on the remission of the duty, fell only from L.84 to L.62 per tun: the decline being L.2 instead of L.12, 10s., or less than one-sixth of the presumable abatement. This is one of those paradoxes which are frequently presented to the observer of commercial phenomena. By what recondite law of prices, or occult mercantile art, is the sudden disappearance of twelve and a-half from one scale balanced by the withdrawal of only two from the other? This is a fine case for the antagonists of free trade. There will not be wanting ignorant or unscrupulous champions of monopoly ready to argue that the difference between L.2 and L.12, 10s. will be pocketed by the merchants, instead of benefiting the consumer, and that the only effect of the vaunted commercial emancipation will be to swell the gains of a parasitic class at the expense of the public revenue. It is worth while to anticipate and refute an argument so plausible and so delusive. For this purpose it is only necessary to remind the reader of the influence of the past and the future on the present, in all human affairs, including commercial operations. For three years past the abolition of this duty has been looked forward to by the parties concerned, who have doubtless taken the prospect of reduction into account, as one element amongst others in the estimation of value, and the settlement of price: so that, when Monday last brought the anticipated change, a considerable proportion of its effect had already been incurred by anticipation. This is the effect of the past on the present. The influence of the future has an analogous tendency to abate the immediate decline of price. The holders naturally inquire what supplies are expected from the fisheries, and compare the probable imports with the probable demand. It so happens that at present the stock of sperm on hand is relatively low, and the fresh supplies of the year are not expected to be large. This acts as a further counterpoise to the diminution of value resulting from the abolition of the duty. The price of sperm oil may be described as having fallen the whole amount of L.12, 10s. per tun, in consequence of the fiscal change, and as having then recovered nearly its former level, in consequence of the real dearth. Had the dearth and the duty co-existed, the price would have been L.12, 10s. higher than it is: so that the benefit reaped by the public from the abatement of duty, though veiled by the contrary influence of an incidental scarcity, is not the less a real and positive saving to the full amount of L.12, 10s. per tun.

Similar observations might be made in reference to the termination of the duty on leather a few years ago. No one gets shoes any cheaper in consequence of taking off this duty, say many persons. True; but this is in consequence of the demand for shoes having increased by the increase of population, and this demand keeps up the price of most kinds of shoes to the former level. Had the duty not been taken off, shoes would now have been so much dearer, because leather is an article which does not admit of a rapid and illimitable increase, like any kind of cloth, and the demand is continually pressing on the supply. Have the public, then, not received a benefit by the withdrawal of the duty on this article? Assuredly they have.

## PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS.

From all we have seen for a century, the tide of affairs has set in waves: any extraordinary advance has always been followed by a reflux. In vain is it bid 'be still,' for it is one of the conditions, and perhaps means, if not of the existence, at least of the progress of society—which, amidst all its perturbations, moves steadily up and down on the shores of time, under the dominion of a power that makes nations advance or recede, and under laws which can only be discovered by long, accurate, analysed observation. As statistical science and education advance, the severity of seasons of distress—whose general course can be calculated—will be diminished by mutual aid, and provision will be made in prosperity against their recurrence; as the losses of shipwreck, fire, and life to society are mitigated by the various kinds of insurance. Knowledge will banish panic.—Ninth Report: Reg. Gen.

## MAIDENHOOD.

MAIDEN with the meek brown eyes,  
In whose orbs a shadow lies,  
Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou, whose locks outshine the sun,  
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,  
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet!  
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,  
On the brooklet's swift advance,  
On the river's broad expanse!

Deep and still, that gliding stream  
Beautiful to thee must seem,  
As the river of a dream!

Then, why pause with indecision,  
When bright angels in thy vision  
Beckon thee to field Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,  
As the dove, with startled eye,  
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hear'st thou voices on the shore,  
That our ears perceive no more,  
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

Oh, thou child of many prayers!  
Life hath quicksands—life hath snare:  
Care and age come unawares!

Like the swell of some sweet tune,  
Morn is risen into noon,  
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough where slumbered  
Buds and blossoms many-numbered:  
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,  
When the young heart overflows,  
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;  
Gates of brass cannot withstand  
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,  
In thy heart the dew of youth,  
On thy lips the smile of truth.

Oh, that dew-like balm shall steal  
Into wounds that cannot heal,  
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal.

And that smile, like sunshine, dart  
Into many a sunless heart;  
For a smile of God thou art.

—Longfellow's Poems.

## SOLID MILK!

We observe in the Repertory of Patent Inventions for January, that a Mr Felix Louis of Southwark has enrolled a process for preserving cows' milk, goats' milk, and asses' milk, by converting the same into solid cakes or masses, which are soluble in warm water, and which may be kept for a long time without losing their original sweetness and freshness. The entire process, if we understand aright the terms of the specification, consists in a little sweetening by sugar, agitation, evaporation, and pressure.

## THE BEST FRIEND.

The most agreeable of all companions is a simple, frank man, without any high pretensions to an oppressive greatness; one who loves life, and understands the use of it; obliging alike at all hours; above all, of a golden temper, and steadfast as an anchor. For such a one we gladly exchange the greatest genius, the most brilliant wit, the profoundest thinker.—Lessing.

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